

CONGRESSMAN

Jimmy Panetta

PROUDLY REPRESENTING THE 20TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA



Dear Friends,

Happy National Nutrition Month! Celebrated annually in March, National Nutrition Month promotes nutrition information and education. As a member of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition, I advocate for expanded access to the nutritious fruits and vegetables grown in the central coast of California. During National Nutrition Month, it is important to highlight federal nutrition programs and their impact in our communities. I continue to work with my colleagues on the Agriculture Committee to strengthen these programs and ensure the nutritional products grown in California's 20th Congressional District are accessible to all consumers.

Federal nutrition programs provide modest benefits that assist those in our communities who need help putting food on the table. [I am committed to fighting](#) for programs that help working families, seniors, children, veterans, and individuals with disabilities who have a nutritious diet, particularly the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

On the Central Coast, 26% of all households that receive SNAP benefits include a senior citizen and 67% include children under the age of 18. Extensive cuts to the program, or unjustifiable changes to work requirements for eligibility, would make it harder for these recipients, and other working families, to receive the assistance they need. I reject any extensive cuts and serious changes to these programs, and will continue to work with my colleagues to strengthen our ability to address hunger in our communities.

On March 12, I spoke with the Bipartisan Policy Center about the importance of strengthening federal nutrition programs like SNAP, and initiatives like the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) and education programs like SNAP-Ed. All of this can be done without limiting consumer choice. I was joined by former Secretaries of

Agriculture Ann Veneman and Dan Glickman. You can [watch my remarks here, starting at the 8:50 minute mark](#).

I also led 90 members of the House of Representatives in sending a letter to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Sonny Perdue and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Mick Mulvaney highlighting concerns against cuts to federal nutrition programs in the Trump administration's fiscal year 2019 budget proposal, as well as calling for more funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. [The full letter can be found here](#).

As Congress debates the 2018 Farm Bill, I continue to work with my colleagues to promote nutrition programs and expand access to the fresh fruits and vegetables grown on the Central Coast.



L: Congressman Panetta with former Secretaries of Agriculture Ann Veneman and Dan Glickman. R: Speaking to agriculture leaders and nutrition experts at the Bipartisan Policy Center.

March Legislation:

- Congressman Rodney Davis (R-IL), fellow co-chair of the Agriculture Research Caucus, and I introduced the bipartisan [Agricultural Research Advisory Board Improvement Act](#). This legislation ensures that USDA will be more responsive to the research priorities that enhance agriculture production and provide consumers with a safe, affordable, and nutritious food supply. I look forward to continuing to work with Congressman Davis to advocate for agriculture research funding in the 2018 Farm Bill.
- Congressman Neal Dunn (R-FL) and I teamed up to eliminate unnecessary trade barriers that are hurting American exports and hindering innovation and advances in agricultural production technologies, including biotechnology. We introduced the bipartisan [Growing American Food Exports Act](#) to amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990. This bill authorizes USDA to promote emerging agriculture technologies abroad and ensure that trade

regulations are based on sound science. This will increase our agricultural exports ensuring that U.S. producers are not subject to unnecessary barriers in trade.

March Highlights:

- As Members of Congress make funding requests to the Appropriations Committee for Fiscal Year 2019, I led a letter with Congressman Rodney Davis (R-IL) and Congresswoman Suzan DelBene (D-WA) to the Agriculture Subcommittee asking for robust funding for USDA's leading research program – the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awards AFRI research, education, and extension grants to combat childhood obesity, improve rural economies, increase food production, create new sources of energy, mitigate the impacts of climate variability, address water availability issues, ensure food safety and security, and train the next generation of agricultural workforce. Our letter was signed by 88 members, which is 21 more than last year! Congressman Davis and I will continue to grow support for these critical research programs through our bipartisan Congressional Agriculture Research Caucus. [The full letter can be found here.](#)
- To mark National Agriculture Week, I [spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives](#) to thank the farmers, farmworkers and shippers who make the Central Coast the Salad Bowl of the World.
- I spoke with Melody Meyer, author of the Organic Matters blog, about advocating for strong investments in organic research and production in the 2018 Farm Bill. [The full interview can be found here.](#)
- I had the honor of being presented the first-ever Champion for Agronomy, Crop, and Soil Science Research award from the Tri-Societies (The American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America and Soil Science Society of America) for founding the Congressional Agriculture Research Caucus and working to educate my fellow members on the importance of investing in agriculture research.



- This month, I met with California Agriculture Leadership Foundation fellows. The program is the longest continuously-operating leadership training experience of its kind in the United States. I enjoyed speaking with the fellows about my career in public service and how I am working to support California agriculture in the 2018 Farm Bill.



- I met with representatives of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, including Agriculture & Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) and California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF). We discussed how to best support organic production on the Central Coast, and how to expand opportunities for beginning farmers.



- The Society of American Florists invited me to address their group prior to the visit to members of Congress on Capitol Hill. As a co-chair of the Cut Flower

Caucus, I spoke about the need to invest in research and data collection, as well as the need for immigration reform.



- I was visited by the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association, including Commissioner Karen Overstreet from San Benito County. We discussed the critical importance of continued support for pests and disease management to protect our valuable specialty crops.



- Congratulations to Kevin Kester, a cattle rancher in Parkfield, for being named the 2018 President of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. Kevin stopped by my office to discuss his new role and how to promote trading opportunities for producers.



- Glenda Humiston, University of California's Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources, visited with other representatives from the UC system to discuss how UC is bettering the lives of Californians through research advancements. We also discussed how UC can partner with local research institutions like the Salinas USDA research station and Hartnell College.



As I continue to work on the 2018 Farm Bill, I want to hear from you about your questions, concerns, and needs. Please call or contact me at my Congressional offices in Salinas, Santa Cruz, or Washington, D.C. or through <https://panetta.house.gov>. Please do not hesitate to reach out and let us know how I can be of service to you.

Sincerely,

JIMMY PANETTA
Member of Congress